

LORELEY AND THE SAILOR: A SAGA OF FATHER RHINE

(A German Legend)

There has always been a lot of singing on my banks and the most beautiful singing comes from my daughter, the water nymph, Loreley. She looks and sounds so wonderful that nobody can resist her. Her favourite spot on the river is a steep rock near a bend where there are whirlpools and high cliffs. Sailors have to be very careful at this point because the navigation is so difficult and dangerous.

Once, a young captain was steering his boat through this narrow part of the river and he heard Loreley singing. He was so enraptured that he looked up to see where the enchanting sound was coming from and he saw Loreley sitting high on a rock with her long hair tumbling down towards him. He was so transfixed that he could not take his eyes from her and his boat went spinning towards the rocks and was smashed to pieces.

That rock is now named after my daughter but she did not always sit there. Some years later, a monk named Goar, who loved fishing, went to sit at that spot on the river with his rod and line. When Loreley saw him coming she started to sing and did everything possible to attract his attention. Goar, however, took no notice of her and told her to move away so that he could concentrate on his fishing. Loreley was so ashamed and humiliated that she fled and Goar felt so much inner strength now that he had resisted her that he became known as St. Goar. There is a town named after him just opposite the Loreley rock even today.